

Germany Enacts Mandatory Lobbyist Registration

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Effective January 1, federal lobbyist registration in Germany is mandatory, whereas, previous registration had been voluntary. Under the new law, lobbying is defined broadly to include direct and indirect attempts to influence the actions of the Bundestag and the Federal Government. Lobbyists are individuals and entities that engage in lobbying themselves, or contract for lobbying services. There are several exemptions to the definition of lobbyist, including one for churches. Those who qualify as lobbyists must register "immediately." Initial registrations will be deemed timely if filed by February 28. Registrants are not required to file reports, but must keep their registration information up to date.

Germany is one of a handful of countries in the European Union that regulate lobbying. Others include the United Kingdom, Austria, Lithuania, France, and Ireland.

U.S. corporations should be mindful that advocacy efforts in foreign countries may trigger lobbyist registration and reporting obligations.

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Practice Areas

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